

Nine Characteristics of Biblical Prayer

by Daryl Wingerd

True prayer is not merely a matter of saying the right words. Biblical prayer is characterized and motivated by the right attitude—right thinking about the greatness of God, the beauty of Christ, and our own unworthiness and weakness. Ask yourself if your prayers are characterized by:

An Understanding of Your Own Insignificance and Sinfulness

When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained; what is man that You take thought of him, and the son of man that You care for him? (Ps. 8:3-4 NASB)

If You, Lord, should mark iniquities, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with You that You may be feared (Ps. 130:3-4).

The Knowledge that Jesus is Your Only Access to the Father

Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh . . . let us draw near (Heb. 10:19-22).

. . . you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. (1 Pet. 2:5)

Adoration for God because of His Character and Attributes

Ascribe greatness to our God! The Rock! His work is perfect, for all His ways are just; a God of faithfulness and without injustice, righteous and upright is He. (Deut. 32:1-4)

I will extol You, my God, O King, and I will bless Your name forever and ever. Every day I will bless You, and I will praise Your name forever and ever. Great is the Lord, and highly to be praised, and His greatness is unsearchable. (Ps. 145:1-3)

Joyful Praise for God's Work in Creation and Redemption

Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created (Rev. 4:11).

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace which He lavished on us. . . . In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will (Eph. 1:3-8, 10-11).

Thankfulness for God's Kindness in Giving Every Good Thing

Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights . . . (James 1:17).

. . . let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name (Heb. 13:15).

A Sense of Your Need of Strength to Fight against Specific Sins

Keep watching and praying that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak (Matt. 26:41).

So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live (Rom. 8:12-13).

Humble Trust as You Ask the Father to Meet Every Need

Ah Lord God! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and by Your outstretched arm! Nothing is too difficult for You (Jer. 32:17).

This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him (1 John 5:14-15).

Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need (Heb. 4:15).

A Selfless Burden to Pray for Others

With all prayer and petition pray at all times . . . be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints, and pray on my behalf . . . (Eph. 6:18-19).

Brethren, pray for us (1 Thess. 5:25). We pray for you always . . . (2 Thess. 1:11).

Pray for those who persecute you . . . (Matt. 5:44; also see 1 Tim 2:1-2).

A Thirst for Increasing Spiritual Wisdom and Understanding

Open my eyes, that I may behold wonderful things from Your law (Ps. 119:18).

For if you cry for discernment, lift your voice for understanding; if you seek for her as silver and search for her as for hidden treasures; then you will discern the fear of the Lord and discover the knowledge of God (Prov. 2:3-5).

I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. (Eph. 1:18-19)